

My name is Bob Groves and I live in Newark, California. I'm here as a concerned citizen and as chairman of the ISDP EIR/EIS committee for the more than one hundred families and their many guests who recreate on King Island and its adjacent waterways in the South Delta.

The meetings two months ago illustrated the widely varied interests in the Delta. I believe what brought everyone together was concern for the Delta. Tonight, our concerns are greater than ever in the wake of the recent storms and flooding. Nature shows us the power of water to reshape the works of man and has issued yet another wake-up call as the ultimate administrator of the State's water programs. I feel that four 'storms of the century' in forty two years indicates the need for a paradigm shift.

The levees and channels of the Delta were originally constructed in the seasonal marshes of the Central Valley over a hundred years ago to reclaim the rich peat deposits for farming. The subsequent developments of the various federal and state water projects have made the Delta a vital and critical link in California's water delivery systems. With every major winter storm however, it shows its age and fragility, its neglect and disrepair and its aptness to fail. It shows clearly as the weak link in the system.

The permanent structures proposed by this project are a component of the settlement of the lawsuit by the South Delta Water Agency. They are intended to raise water surface elevations for agricultural pumps in South Delta channels when summer flows are low in the San Joaquin River. This focus on higher surface elevations poses dangers to surrounding areas and it also puts instream islands at risk. Page C-1 in Appendix 1 of Volume II of the draft lists 'channel capacity' as one of the five influences on the water conditions affecting the Agency. Area farmers, business owners and long-time residents all spoke to increasing shallowness in South Delta channels. Raising water levels may make more water available, but only temporarily. The basis of the real problem is siltation and the proper solution is to remove it. Channel capacities need to be increased by deepening and/or widening to sizes that are adequate for their uses today along with necessary levee strengthening and upgrading. Dams and reservoirs in the Sierras have increased siltation. The CVP and SWP have increased siltation. The temporary barriers program has increased siltation. Repairing levee breaks from the storm runoff and releases is adding tons of silt. I'm sure the forebay has incurred silting since it was built in the sixties and some project alternatives propose greater forebay capacity. Why, in the six years since the last draft has there been no ongoing dredging program in the forebay?

Man is and continues to be his own worst enemy and to raise water levels in the delta only invites further disaster.

The environmental draft, as far as I saw, doesn't address the impact of dangerously high flows. What additional flooding would have occurred by waters backed up by these structures had they been in place earlier this month? DREDGE THE DELTA !